

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, I

## Allies Foresee Wartime Peril In Cuban Base

By DREW MIDDLETON

Officers in navies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization say that they are becoming concerned over the possible wartime potential of Soviet naval construction at Cienfuegos on the south coast of Cuba. They say that the uproar over a reported Soviet combat unit in Cuba diverted attention from what the officers view as the graver threat of the naval base at Cienfuegos.

According to the officers, the use of Cienfuegos by Soviet submarines in time of war would make it more difficult for the United States Navy to escort troop transports and supply ships across the Atlantic.

Soviet submarines and, perhaps, bombers from Cuban air bases, operating in conjunction with naval and air forces based in the Soviet Union, could reduce the area through which convoys could move to Europe with relative immunity, according to this view.

### No Recent Expansion

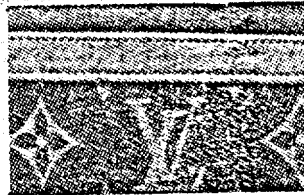
The naval officers contend that Cienfuegos would become an operational base as soon as the Soviet naval command assigned submarines to it. Although there has been no recent expansion of naval facilities at Cienfuegos, the officers say they can handle two or more submarines.

United States reaction to this, State and Defense Department officials said, would vary with the type of submarine assigned to the base. The deployment of ballistic-missile submarines would be regarded as breaking the agreement between Washington and Moscow not to base such weapons at Cienfuegos. The stationing of an attack or mine-laying submarine at the port would be a lesser immediate threat to national security, the officials said, but in time of war such submarines could be a threat to the movement of reinforcements and supplies out of United States ports.

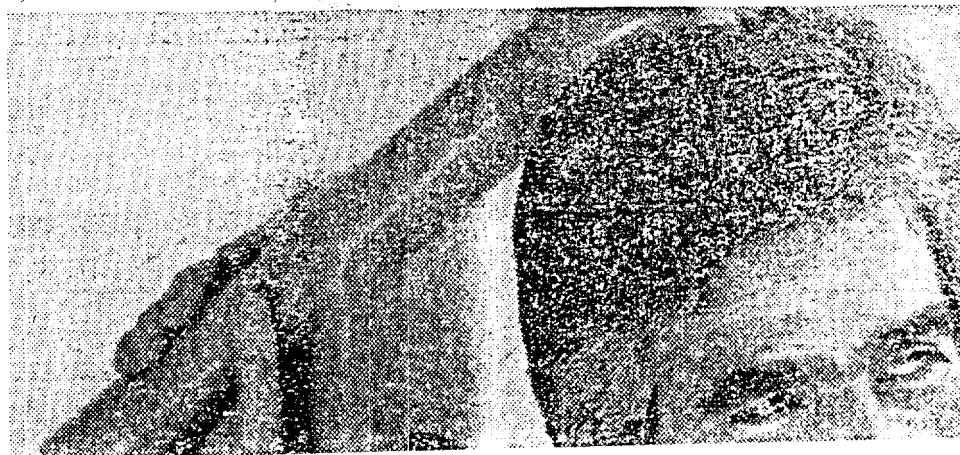
Cienfuegos has not caused wide public concern, although Senator Richard Stone, a Florida Democrat, has been asking the Pentagon about reports of an expansion of the base.

The Defense Planning Committee of the Atlantic alliance has given thought to the potential danger of a Soviet base at Cienfuegos, just as it has to the possibilities of Soviet naval bases on Africa's east and west coasts. Soviet submarines stationed at those bases could be a threat to oil tankers moving out of the Persian Gulf to round the Cape of Good Hope on the voyage to Western Europe and North

# DECEMBER 1979



3 4  
9 10 11  
16 17 18  
23 24 25



Approved For Release 2005/08/02 : CIA-RDP81B00080R001400200006-9

stationed at the Soviet base in Cienfuegos to oil tankers moving out of the Persian Gulf to round the Cape of Good Hope on the voyage to Western Europe and North America.

#### Moorings for Submarines Built

The expansion of the Cienfuegos base began in the early 1970's. The work included moorings for submarines and their tenders and the reconstruction of pier facilities. In early 1978, work was started on a new pier, and barracks were constructed ashore.

A Cuban base would fit into the general scenario for naval war in the Atlantic as it is now seen by military planners.

Western naval strategy calls for the defense of the northern entrance into the Atlantic between Greenland, Iceland and Britain. In this forward defense zone, an effort would be made to destroy or turn back submarines from Soviet bases in the Murmansk area.

The Atlantic alliance would also have to take into account the threat posed by the Soviet bomber known in the West as Backfire. These bombers, which are based in the Murmansk area, can attack transports and supply ships in the mid-Atlantic.

A recent article in The Naval War College Review, by Capt. William K. Sullivan of the United States Navy, states that "allied ships unaccompanied by defensive air cover would have to transit via southern Atlantic sealanes in order to stay out of range of the Backfire."

#### Range Might Be Enhanced

The article says that, if the Russians were to seize Norwegian airfields, the Backfire bombers would be able to extend their forays into the South Atlantic. In such a contingency, according to Captain Sullivan, submarines based at Cienfuegos would be in a position to attack the southern flank of the convoy route.

Some Western European naval sources speculate that in a crisis, the Soviet naval command might transfer submarines to the Cuban base from the Northern Fleet based at Severomorsk, north of Murmansk. In the event of war, these submarines would be in position to attack American warships and merchantmen moving out of East Coast ports.

Adm. Isaac C. Kidd, who recently retired as commander of NATO forces in the Atlantic, believes that an expanded Soviet presence in the Caribbean would also present a threat to American mobilization. Admiral Kidd says that in the event of war in Europe thousands of supply ships would have to cross the Atlantic each month.

If the Russians were to station bomber and fighter-bomber squadrons in Cuba, the stakes for America would rise. Air bases are more vulnerable than submarines, one source said, but a single, successful surprise attack against bases and ports on the southern and eastern coasts of the United States could throw the initial effort to supply Western Europe into confusion.

#### Soviet Paper Says U.S. Is Using Iran Crisis as Pretext to Interfere

MOSCOW, Dec. 2 (UPI) — The Soviet Army newspaper, Krasnaya Zvezda, said



Cashmere. The Mere Mention of

This softest, most luxurious, treasured of wools — only a few precious ounces